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of widespread contacts of the Indian peoples among themselves before the Spanish Conquest, and the common influence of Spanish colonial institutions since the Conquest.

Tepoztlán parallels, to a remarkable degree, many of the characteristics of Mexico as a whole. Within the relatively limited area of the municipio of Tepoztlán [24] we find practically the entire range of climatic zones of Mexico, from the *tierra fría* to *tierra caliente*, with their accompanying variety of natural resources. It is a striking fact that over fifty per cent of the total land area of Mexico falls within the range of altitudes found within this single municipio, that is, from approximately 3,500 to 9,500 feet. Tepoztlán is also distinctive in the way in which its statistical indices follow national figures for such items as the percentage of its arable land to total land, the percentage of its forest land to total land, and the average size of landholdings. The rate of population growth as well as the distribution of age groups also closely parallels the national figures.

In Tepoztlán, as in Mexico as a whole, we find contrasting elements of the primitive and the modern, the old and the new, the Spanish colonial and the contemporary. Tepoztlán has a strong Indian heritage; many pre-Columbian traits persist in the village today. The system of communal land-ownership, an important aspect of the economy and social organization of the municipio, has remained practically intact. Many elements of pre-Hispanic agriculture are found; corn, beans, and squash remain the staple products. Pre-Columbian traits of material culture have also persisted, particularly in house construction, furnishings, cookery, foods, and clothing. Among the more important of these items we find adobe walls, the sweathouse (*temascal*) made of stone and mortar, clay plastered granaries for corn (*cuescomatl*), the hearth (*tlequilitl*), the three-legged grinding stone (*metate*), the clay griddle (*comal*), the mortar and pestle (*molcaxitl* and *texolotl*), huaraches, tortillas, chile, and pulque. In non-material culture there are also survivals, especially in curing and magic, and in customs pertaining to birth and other stages of the life cycle.[25] The Náhuatl language has also persisted. As late as 1927 Náhuatl was spoken by nearly all the inhabitants, although most of the villagers also spoke Spanish.

The large number of Spanish colonial elements which still exist in the village culture today were introduced early in the sixteenth century soon after the Spanish Conquest. The most important of these traits are the physical layout of the village with its barrios, streets, and central plaza; Catholicism and the churches; the Spanish language; a money economy; domestic animals, the plow and other agricultural tools; and the greater part of the beliefs and customs of the people.

Side by side with the pre-Columbian and Spanish colonial elements are many significant items of modern industrial civilization, such as corn mills and sewing

[24] While the village of Tepoztlán is the primary subject of this study, the village cannot be understood except within the framework of the municipio of Tepoztlán, of which it is the *cabecera* (head), a status roughly equivalent to our county seat. In this study, therefore, there will be frequent references both to the village and the municipio.

[25] Many of Bernardino de Sahagún's descriptions of native Aztec diseases and their cures are still remarkably accurate descriptions of present-day customs in Tepoztlán. Indeed, many sections of Sahagún read as if he had been relying upon Tepoztecan informants.

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1 *the setting:*

THE VILLAGE of Tepoztlán is in the state of Morelos, about sixty miles south of Mexico City. It is connected by a paved road with the Mexico City–Cuernavaca highway and is fifteen miles northeast of Cuernavaca. The village forms part of the municipio of Tepoztlán which embraces an area of 60,000 acres and consists of eight villages: San Juan, Santo Domingo, Amatlán, Ixcatepec, Gabriel Mariaca, San Andrés, Santiago, and Tepoztlán proper. The northern section of the municipio coincides in part with the boundary line between the state of Morelos and the Federal District. (See Fig. 2.)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The topography of the state of Morelos can be described as a sugar bowl, tilted to the southeast, with mountains forming the outer rim and the level, fertile lands of the sugar plantations forming the center. The municipio of Tepoztlán is on the northern rim of this bowl. It extends from the rugged, mountainous, and heavily wooded country in the north, down the slope of the Ajusco Mountain range to the level, fertile lands of the sugar plantation area near Yautepec. From the northern limits near Milpa Alta to the southern limits near Yautepec, a distance of about seventeen miles, there is a drop in altitude from about 10,500 feet [1] to about 3,700. While most of the villages tend to cluster near the center of the municipio (none are found in the extreme northern or southern portions), there is nevertheless a wide range in altitude among them. Indeed, the villages are located at seven different levels. The widest range is between San Juan in the north at about 7,000 feet, and San Andrés in the south at about 4,300 feet. But even in the case of Tepoztlán and San Juan, which are less than four miles apart, one is 2,000 feet above the other. (See Fig. 3.)

The northern part of the municipio is in *tierra fría* or the cold zone; the middle part is in *tierra templada* or the temperate zone; and the southern part is in *tierra*

[1] Otlayuca, the highest point in the northern portion of the municipio, is 3,151 meters or about 10,335 feet. See *Carta General del Estado de Morelos*, Secretaría de Fomento (Mexico, D.F., 1910).

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Fig. 6. Rock terrace in Tepoztlán.

133 mations, lies the village of Tepoztlán.[6] (See Fig. 7.) These hills and rock out-
[361] croppings constitute two fairly well defined units. One begins just north of the village and curves toward the southeast, reaching to the neighboring municipio of Tlayacapan, a distance of about fifteen miles. The other begins just south of the village and extends to the east for a short distance to form the southern wall of the valley of Tepoztlán. The valley runs northwest-southeast and then turns directly south. The upper or northwestern end of the valley is considerably narrower than the lower end. The valley is drained by a small perennial stream locally known as the Río Atenco, which flows through the village and then turns east and south where it flows into the Yautepec River which in turn joins the Balsas River.

[823] The spectacular peaks and buttes of the rock outcroppings which rise to 1,200 feet above the village are locally known as *cerros* and are important landmarks to the
103 people of Tepoztlán. Each *cerro* is known by its Náhuatl name and has an ancient legend associated with it. Among the more important *cerros* are *El Tlahuitepetl*

101 [6] In the early sixteenth-century documents Tepoztlán is called "Tepuztlan." Writers on the history of the village have suggested that the term is derived from the Náhuatl *tepoztli* (iron) and *tlan* (abundance); that is, Tepoztlán means "place of abundant iron." But there are no iron deposits in Tepoztlán, nor is there evidence of any in the past. More recently, Muller has suggested another interpretation which would seem to be more in accord with all the facts. She suggests that Tepoztlán is the Hispanicized version of the older Nahua term *Tepoztectla*, which means "place of the broken rocks." This is derived from *tetl* (rock) and *postectli* (broken), and is an accurate description of the village site. Muller claims that some of the early chroniclers used this term for Tepoztlán. There would still remain the problem of explaining the use of a copper ax as the glyph for Tepoztlán in the Codex Mendocino. It may be that this glyph was used because they had no other way of showing broken rock. Certainly copper axes may have been imported by the village.